

172. *Progne dominicensis* (Gmel.). GREAT BLUE SWALLOW.—Migrant and summer resident, a few wintering. Observed only once during my stay. This was at Priestman's River on February 5 when large numbers of birds, unquestionably this species, though none were obtained, appeared in company with many *Hemiprocne zonaris*. For a full account see Gosse ('Birds of Jamaica,' pp. 69-72).

173. *Petrochelidon fulva* (Vieill.) CUBAN CLIFF SWALLOW. CAVE SWALLOW.—An abundant resident species, especially near the coast, and not so common in the interior of the island. The caves, before referred to in this series of articles, in the faces of the cliffs along the shore, were favorite roosting and resting places for this species, and probably the birds bred here later in the year. Hundreds could be seen, about sunset, retiring to these caves at Priestman's River.

174. *Chelidon erythrogaster* (Bodd.). BARN SWALLOW.—Not observed. Included by A. and E. Newton ('Handbook Jamaica,' 1881, p. 107).

175. *Tachycineta euchrysea* (Gosse). GOLDEN SWALLOW.—This species seems of very local distribution. During the months spent on the island it was not even noted. From all that can be learned it is confined to the higher altitudes where it is resident and only common locally.

176. *Clivicola riparia* (Linn.). BANK SWALLOW. Not observed. Recorded by A. and E. Newton ('Handbook of Jamaica,' 1881, p. 107).

(To be concluded.)

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS ON THE GENUS *PITTA*.

BY LEONHARD STEJNEGER.

MR. D. G. ELLIOT'S recent paper in 'The Auk' (*antea*, pp. 51-52) on the Genus *Pitta* Vieillot, suggests a few remarks.

The earliest publication of the name *Pitta* is either in the 'Analyse' or in the fourth volume of the 'Nouveau Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle,' pp. 355-358. Both publications bear the same apparent date,] viz., 1816, [but internal evidence would

indicate that the 'Analyse' was published later.¹ The diagnosis in the 'Dictionnaire' is also much fuller, and several more species are mentioned than those figured by Buffon in the 'Planches Enluminées.' And here is another point, viz., that Vieillot's genus, as well as the French name 'Brève,' is not taken from Buffon, properly speaking, but from Montbeillard (Hist. Nat. Ois. III, 1775, p. 412).² In this are mentioned four species only, viz., Pl. Enl. Nos. 89, 257, and 258 (*but not at all No. 355!*) and Edwards' pl. 324.³ The latter is *Pitta brachyurus* (LINN.), being in fact the basis of the name, and the type of *Eucichla* is not mentioned at all. This simplifies the elimination process greatly, the result being, as Mr. Elliot has already decided, that the name *Pitta* belongs to the short-tailed group and can only belong to it! But as for the type of it, I think Sclater is right in giving it as *P. brachyura*. Were we to take the first species mentioned by Vieillot, the type would be *Pitta cyanura* VIEILL. which Mr. Elliot has just decided is the type of *Eucichla*! Besides, no code of nomenclature provides for the selection of the type by taking the first species. The A. O. U. Code distinctly provides for the process of elimination; and if that be applied I think it will be found that *P. brachyura*, mentioned both by Montbeillard and by Vieillot, must stand as *the* type.

The mention of the name *P. brachyura* raises another question, viz., that of the specific appellation of these birds. Sclater (Cat. Bds. Br. Mus., XIV) gets very easily around the matter by

¹ Quite a number of names *not* in the first four volumes of the 'Dictionnaire' are found in the 'Analyse,' making it probable that they were invented later, for instance, *Acridothères*, *Alectrurus*, *Aramus*, *Ægialites*, *Anerportes*. The case of *Alectrurus* is particularly interesting, for on p. 68 of the 'Analyse' the original *Gallita* was not changed, probably by an oversight, while in the text proper it was changed to *Alectrurus*, but too late to get the new name into the 'Dictionnaire.' True, Vieillot in the latter under *Astrurine cendrée* refers to the 'Analyse,' but that does not prove that it was published or even printed at the time, especially as no page is quoted.

² I quote this edition, because it is evidently the one Vieillot refers to in the 'Dictionnaire' (l. c.) as follows: "Monbeillard les [i. e. les brèves] a isolées d'après les différences de conformation extérieure par lesquelles, dit-il, la nature elle-même les a distinguées." As a matter of fact Montbeillard (l. c.) is the creator of the genus ("Je n'ai pu m'empêcher de séparer ces oiseaux d'avec les merles, voyant les différences," etc.,) while Vieillot only supplied the Latinized name.

³ Sclater, consequently, is correct in saying that *all* belong to the short-tailed group.

simply querying the identification of Buffon's plates. But the figures in question are too well made to justify such a proceeding. There can be no doubt that Edwards' pl. 324 faithfully reproduces the common Indian species. Sclater admits this by adopting the name, but he adds *Turdus coronatus* MÜLLER to the synonyms, though with a query. This is unnecessary, for nothing can be more certain than the fact that Pl. Enl. 258 represents a bird with the whole head, including the throat, black. With the exception of the absence of red on the belly and under tail-coverts the latter plate agrees exactly with Temminck's *P. irena*. The fact that the red is also missing in Pl. Enl. 257, otherwise indistinguishable from Temminck's *P. cyanoptera*, makes it extremely probable that the absence of the red is due to the same cause, either to age, the red being very pale and dull in the young, or possibly to the manner of preservation of the skins, or to fading. I may mention that I have before me an undoubted adult bird of the latter in which the red is almost entirely gone (U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 14,456; U. S. Expl. Exp.). The difficulty arising from Buffon's giving the habitat of no. 258 as "Bengale," while *P. irena* inhabits the island of Timor, is easily overcome by the fact that Brisson, in describing the same specimen, says that it came from the Moluccas, and as a matter of fact, Sclater does not query the pertinancy of Brisson's description. Oates (Bds. Br. Ind., II, 1890, p. 392) seems to accept the identification of Pl. Enl. no. 257, but he gets away from Müller's name *P. moluccensis*, because it "conveys an erroneous impression of this bird's habitat." Apart from the unsound principle involved in allowing the rejection of a name even on such a ground, there is another reason for disagreeing with him, viz., that it appears that those older authors did not always restrict the name Moluccan Islands to only those which are so called to-day.

Finally, Mr. Elliot in his paper alludes to the genus '*Coracopitta*.' The fate of the name of this genus is strange indeed! I have been accused of having "showered" new names upon the ornithological public in my portion of the bird volume of the 'Standard Natural History,' yet my accusers do not find it worth their while to go to that book for names when they need new ones; they would rather add to the 'shower'! In the volume

alluded to, p. 466 (1885), I substituted *Mellopitta* for *Melanipitta*, preoccupied, being careful not to deviate too far from the original name, in order to minimize the change. Sclater, three years later (Cat. Bds. Br. Mus., XIV, p. 449) adds his *Coracopitta* to the list of synonyms. I at once called the attention of ornithologists to this fact (Auk, 1889, p. 79) and Count Salvadori did the same in the Ibis (1890, p. 124), but apparently to no purpose, for in 1892 Mr. Sharpe (Cat. Bds. Br. Mus., XVII, p. 7, foot-note) proposed the amended name of *Coracocichla* alleging *Coracopitta* to be preoccupied, because Bonaparte, in 1854, ought to have written *Coracopitta* for *Corapitta*! Surely this 'shower' of names could easily have been avoided, while I will assert that the changes which I undertook in the 'Standard Natural History' were unavoidable and necessary under the A. O. U. Code of Nomenclature. A further study of that volume might prevent other unnecessary changes in the future. Thus one may find *Atrichornis* substituted for *Atrichia*, preoccupied, though still employed in 1890 in the thirteenth volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum'; also the name *Alopocheu* for *Chenalopex*, preoccupied (not in Waterhouse's Index Gen. Av.), but these are by no means the only ones.



VIEILLOT'S 'ANALYSE' AND BUFFON'S 'BRÈVE.'

BY D. G. ELLIOT.

By the courtesy of Dr. Stejneger I am placed in possession of proofs of his article on the genus *Pitta*, published in this number of 'The Auk,' and am therefore enabled to discuss some points in his paper, without being obliged to wait three months for the opportunity to state my views in this journal.

With the greater portion of Dr. Stejneger's paper I am in complete accord, and as regards the proper names to be borne by the Pittas mentioned by him I have for many years contended that those given in his article were the only correct ones, in spite